GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:323
ANSWERED ON:17.04.2000
REVIEW OF GANGA ACTION PLAN
MALYALA RAJAIAH

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ganga Action Plan has been reviewed;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the remaining part of the Ganga Action Plan is likely to be implemented?

Answer

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS

(SHRI T.R. BAALU)

(a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement in respect of parts (a) to (c) of reply to Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 323 for 17-04-2000 regardingReview of Ganga Action Plan.

(a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Ganga Action Plan and the National River Conservation Plan are reviewed regularly at various levels. There is a National River Conservation Authority under the Prime Minister which reviews the Programme.A Monitoring Committee under the Member, Planning Commission and a Steering Committee under Secretary,Ministry of Environment and Forests review the Programme quarterly. In addition, a mid-term evaluation of the Ganga Action Plan Phase I was undertaken jointly by the Aligarh Muslim University, Roorkee University, Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur and the All India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health, Calcutta. The evaluation report has concluded that with the reduction of discharge of organic matter, a necessary first step in restoring the water quality has been achieved to a fair level under the Ganga Action Plan phase-I. It is also mentioned that the Ganga Action Plan phase-I as conceived and implemented is an appropriate programme for application to other river basins. Some shortcomings of the programme were also brought out in the evaluation report and have been taken note of for suitable modification in the subsequent river action plans. These include reduction of discharge of organic matter, local conditions to be given adequate consideration in the choice of sewage treatment technology, regular cleaning of sewage and interception structures constructed under the Ganga Action Plan Phase I, regular training for the staff posted at all levels, resource recovery options to be analysed etc.

A cost benefit analysis of the Ganga Action Planphase-I was also undertaken by a reputed expert from Harvard Institute of International Development in collaboration with local Indian institutes viz. Institute of Economic Growth, New Delhi, Indian Toxicology Research Centre, Lucknow and All India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health, Calcutta.The study broadly concluded that inspite of its many shortcomings the Ganga Action Plan phase-I has delivered significant benefits to India.The polluted stretch of the river violating the bathing class standards would have been atleast 740 kms between Kannauj and Varanasi as compared to 437 kms between the same towns with the Ganga Action Plan phase-I.In terms of both cost and time taken, the Ganga Action Plan phase-I compares favourably with those of the other major rivers of the world. The study has concluded that the internal rate of return of the Ganga Action Plan phase-I is well above 10% required of public sector projects.

(c) The scheme of the Ganga Action Plan Phase I which was started in 1985 has been closed with effect from 31.3.2000.However, the second phase of the Ganga Action Plan covering rivers Yamuna, Gomati, Damodar and the main stem of Gangaapproved between April 1993 and October 1996 is presently under implementation and is likely to be completed by the end of 10th Plan.